

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 01341 251542Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 01341

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PORG RH UN UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE

REF: STATE 019752 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY OFFICER DISCUSSED REFTEL WITH JOHNNY GRAHAM JAN 25. GRAHAM SAID THAT OWEN IS ADAMANT IN HIS POSITION THAT WE SHOULD NOT DEVELOP A US-UK DRAFT WHICH WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE NEGOTIATED WITH HARRIMAN. HE SAID OWEN BELIEVES WE SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO ENGAGE IN PRE-EMPTIVE ACTION AND THAT ANY DRAFT STATEMENT WHICH WE COULD DEVELOP WOULD ONLY ENCOUNTER HARRIMAN'S EFFORTS TO STIFFEN THE LANGUAGE BEYOND ACCEPTABILITY.

2. GRAHAM SAID THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S VIEW IS THAT THE UK SHOULD OPPOSE A DEBATE ON RHODESIA AT THIS CRITICAL MOMENT IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. IF A DEBATE DOES OCCUR, HOWEVER, IT SHOULD NOT BE FOCUSED ON A SINGLE ASPECT OF THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM (E.G., THE INTERNAL TALKS) BUT, RATHER, SHOULD BE A PROPER DEBATE AT WHICH ALL THE NATIONALIST LEADERS ARE INVITED TO SPEAK.

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3. EMBASSY OFFICER AGAIN WENT OVER OUR ARGUMENTS, EMPHASIZING THAT OUR SUGGESTED APPROACH IS ESSENTIALLY TACTICAL AND AIMED AT TAKING THE STEAM OUT OF HARRIMAN'S DETERMINATION. IF A DRAFT CANNOT BE AGREED WITH HIM, THEN AT LEAST OUR JOINT EFFORT MIGHT PROVE AN ADVANTAGE. MOREOVER, IF THIS MORNING'S UPI REPORT THAT SMITH IS ABOUT TO ANNOUNCE A SALISBURY AGREEMENT PROVES CORRECT,

THIS WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE OCCASION FOR AN ANGLO-AMERICAN STATEMENT. GRAHAM REITERATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S POSITION IS FIRM AND THAT INSTRUCTIONS TO RICHARD (WHO APPARENTLY HAS BEEN ARGUING OUR CASE TO THE FCO) ARE BEING DRAFTED. IF HARRIMAN'S OBJECTIVE IS A STATEMENT, GRAHAM WENT ON, THEN OWEN IS SCHEDULED TODAY TO MAKE A LENGTHY STATEMENT ON RHODESIA IN RESPONSE TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

4. GRAHAM SAID HE WAS CERTAIN THAT HIS RESPONSE REPRESENTED OWEN'S CONVICTION AND THAT THE PROBLEM HAD BEEN GIVEN CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE. EMBASSY OFFICER SAID HE HOPED WE WOULD NOT CUT OFF DISCUSSIONS OF THESE TACTICS AND THAT OUR POINTS WOULD AGAIN BE BROUGHT TO OWEN'S ATTENTION.

BREWSTER

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